



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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**Testimony of Rep. Mary Mushinsky (85th) in Support of HB 5029, An Act
Concerning Sexual Assault and Intimate Partner Violence on Campus**

Before the Higher Education Committee
Tuesday, February 11, 2014

10:30 a.m. in Room 2E

Wallingford is a small town in which nothing much happens—it is safe to walk around town any hour of the day or night. A Wallingford student is unprepared for UConn’s large campus and not ready for sexual predators she might find there. One of my constituents was trapped in off-campus housing last year and sexually assaulted. She did not realize she was trapped in the building until too late. There was a slow and unsatisfactory response by the school to her assault.

We very much need HB 5029, and I strongly support it. Key elements we need in the bill include:

1. Primary prevention training--
 - a. We need to teach students “street smarts” that they may detect and avoid high risk scenarios;
 - b. We need to teach bystanders how to assist a threatened student. Bystander education was a feature of the legislature’s anti-bullying law to protect children.
2. Mandatory reporting, so we can track trends in campus violence and steadily reduce the incidents. This was also an important feature of the anti-bullying law.
3. Anonymous reporting, as we allowed in the anti-bullying law. This will produce more accurate data.

Experts estimate one in five female college students are victims of unwanted sexual assault. A very small percentage (approximately 3%) of male students are responsible for most of the incidents, especially connected to athletics or fraternities.

It is a big change from small town to major campus, where students don't have adult protection. We must equip our students to defend themselves and their fellow students, collect data on our progress and measure the response of the state's higher education system. Thank you for raising this bill.